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CONGRESS AND U.S. ARMS AID

ANNCR: THE UNITED STATES SENATE HAS APPROVED A FOREIGN ARMS AID PROGRAM THAT ONLY REDUCES BY A SLIGHT AMOUNT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION'S ORIGINAL REQUEST BUT WOULD ESCALATE CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL OVER THE PROGRAM. NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS

VOICE: THE MEASURE PASSED BY A TWO-TO-ONE MARGIN IN THE SENATE -- SIXTY VOTES TO THIRTY -- IS SIMILAR TO ANOTHER PENDING IN THE HOUSE. AND IT REDUCED BY FOUR HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS THE ADMINISTRATION'S ORIGINAL REQUEST, SO THAT THE BILL NOW PROVIDES THREE THOUSAND MILLION OVER-ALL. SEVENTY PERCENT OF THIS AMOUNT WOULD GO TO MIDDLE EAST NATIONS -- ISRAEL, JORDAN, SYRIA AND EGYPT. BUT THE DOLLARS AND CENTS INVOLVED IN THE LEGISLATION ARE NOWHERE AS SIGNIFICANT AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH THAT A SERIES OF AMENDMENTS WRITTEN INTO THE BILL REFLECT.

THESE PROVISIONS HAVE A CENTRAL AIM -- TO TIGHTEN CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL SIGNIFICANTLY ON THE SALES OR TRANSFERS OF AMERICAN-MADE WEAPONS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THE BILL GREATLY INCREASES THE AUTHORITY OF CONGRESS TO APPROVE OR VETO SUCH SHIPMENTS. CONVERSELY, THE LEGISLATION WOULD DIMINISH THEWHITE HOUSE'S POWER TO ALLOW SUCH SALES OR TRANSFERS OF AMERICAN WEAPONS.

VIEWED OBJECTIVELY, THESE PROVISIONS ARE A REFLECTION OF MANY OF THE CONCERNS VOICED IN RECENT DAYS AND WEEKS BY CO-GRESS -- AND SHARED TO SOME EXTENT BY THE ADMINISTRATION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ARMS SALES LEGISLATION TRIES TO END BRIBES ON WEAPONS DEALS BY ARMS OR AEROSPACE MANUFACTURERS BY MAKING DETAILS OF LL SUCH TRANSACTIONS PUBLIC. THE SENATE BILL WOULD

ALSO MAKE PUBLIC DETAILS OF PREVIOUSLY SECRET ARMS DEALS. AND IT WOULD BRING UNDER FEDERAL CONTROL COMMERCIAL SALES UP TO NOW PRACTICALLY FREE OF SUCH INTERVENTION. SUCH PRIVATE SALES WOULD COME UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THOSE CHANNELED THROUGH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

THE SENATE BILL WOULD ALSO PLACE A CEILING ON THE MONEY AVAILABLE AND ON THE NUMBER OF UNITED STATES MILITARY PERSONNEL USED TO FURTHER OVERSEAS ARMS SALES -- REFLECTING CONGRESSIONAL FEARS OF ANY FUTURE VIETNAM-LIKE INVOLVEMENT. ONE AMENDMENT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS ANY COVERT MILITARY AID TO ANY FORCES IN ANGOLA. THIS PROVISION WOULD REQUIRE THE PRESIDENT TO ASK PUBLICLY FOR SUCH AID, AND WOULD GRANT CONGRESS A VETO POWER OVER IT. THE SENATE ARMS SALES BILL WOULD ALSO PERMIT SALES OF WEAPONS TO TURKEY ONLY IF THEY ARE NOT SENT TO TURKISH FORCES ON CYPRUS.

A MAJOR PROVISION OF THE SENATE ARMS BILL WOULD CUT OFF ALL MILITARY SHIPMENTS TO CHILE, PROHIBITING SALES BY ANY AMERICAN COMPANY THERE. AND ANOTHER THAT WOULD CUT OFF AID TO COUNTRIES HELPING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS TO ESCAPE CAPTURE AND PUNISHMENT.

IN SUM, THE SENATE BILL AND A COMPANION MEASURE INCLUDING MANY OF THE SAME PROVISIONS NOW BEING CONSIDERED IN THE HOUSE REPRESENT THE MOST SWEEPING OVERHAUL OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY AID PROGRAM IN TWENTY YEARS. THE HOUSE MEASURE IT IS EXPECTED WILL BE ACTED ON BY THE END OF THE MONTH, AND THEN WILL HAVE TO BE RECONCILED WITH THE SENATE VERSION.

AT ANY RATE, WHATEVER LEGISLATION EMERGES FROM CONGRESS IS SURE TO SHARPEN THE DEBATE NOW GOING ON BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES AS TO THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

FOR THE LEGISLATION NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION CERTAINLY AIMS AT EXPANDING CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL OVER WHAT THE LEGISLATORS CONSIDER BURGEONING SALES OF AMERICAN ARMS OVERSEAS.

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